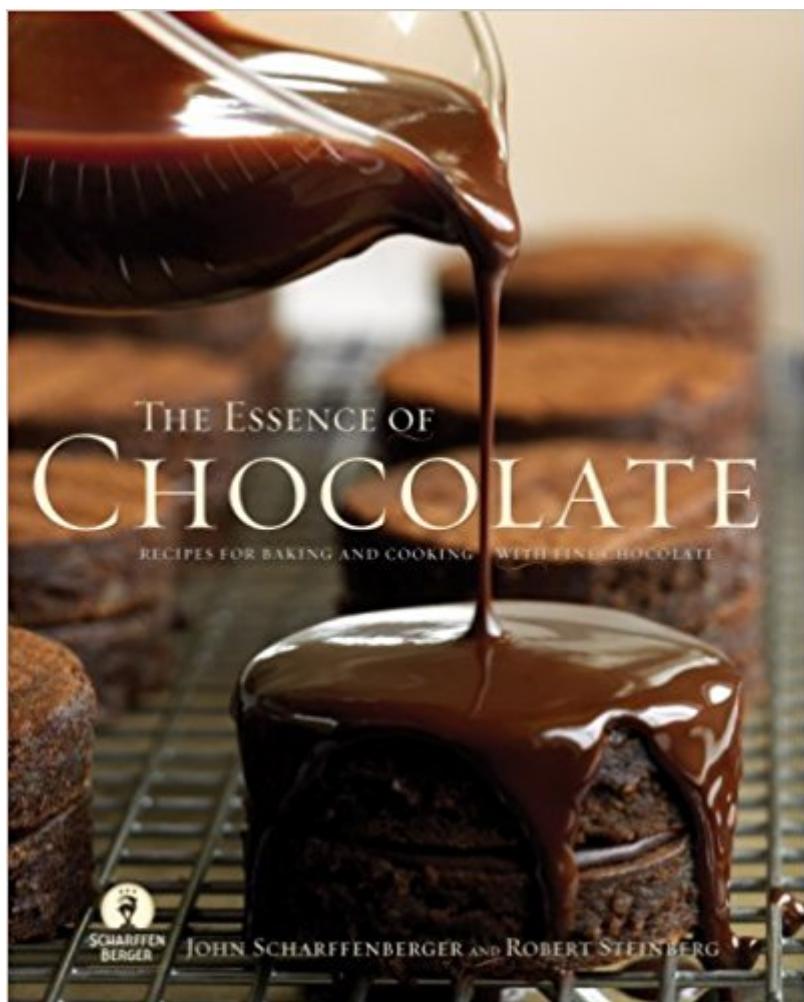


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# Essence Of Chocolate: Recipes For Baking And Cooking With Fine Chocolate



## **Synopsis**

The first cookbook from America's premier chocolate makers, filled with recipes, kitchen tips, and dazzling photographsAs Americans have become fascinated by chocolate, and especially high-quality chocolate, one name has risen above the rest: Scharffen Berger. Founded in 1996 by Robert Steinberg, a physician and amateur chef, and John Scharffenberger, an award-winning vintner, the company's confections have won a following among food professionals and home cooks alike. Now, in their first cookbook, the duo shares their passion with the world. The Essence of Chocolate features more than one hundred spectacular -- and often simple -- recipes drawn from the Scharffen Berger files and from two dozen top pastry chefs. It is divided into three sections: "Intensely Chocolate," which includes such decadent treats as That Chocolate Cake, in which the sumptuous flavor of chocolate is the star; "Essentially Chocolate," with lighter chocolate desserts like White Velvet Cake with Milk Chocolate Ganache or Brown Butter Blondies; and "A Hint of Chocolate," with recipes that use chocolate's spicier qualities to their best effect, like Vegetarian Chili and John's Cocoa Rub. And all will work magnificently with any high-quality chocolate. Filled with helpful tips, sumptuous photographs, and the story of how chocolate is really made, here is a book that is every bit as seductive as its subject.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

'The Essence of Chocolate' by Scharffen Berger Chocolate founders, John Scharffenberger and Robert Steinberg is a 'culinary memoir duet' where the principal authors take the roles more of

‘Executive Producer’ than true writer or even editor. Most of the recipe writing chores are assumed by a fairly large stable of well-known chocolatier practitioners such as Alice Medrich and David Lebovitz plus a number of other culinary luminaries such as Rose Levy Beranbaum, Michael Chiraello, Michael Richard, Jacques Pepin, Thomas Keller, and Rick Bayless. Most of the yeoman’s work on the book appears to have been done by Suzie Heller (a collaborator with Jacques Pepin and Thomas Keller), the recipe tester and (I suspect) editor, Ann Krueger Spivack (a collaborator with Cat Cora and Michael Chiarello), and ‘Bouchon’ photographer, Deborah Jones. Scharffenberger and Steinberg are former vintner physician respectively, who joined up in the early 1990s to create what has become the only native American producer of very high end chocolate. Scharffenberger contributed a knowledge of the food business and Steinberg primarily contributed the scientific background which enabled these two chocolatier newbies to make a go of it in a small space with a small budget and with practically no experience in the chocolate business. Their most substantial contributions to this book are memoirs on how they got together and got into this business, plus essays on the future of cacao agriculture in the primary cacao sources in Central America. I was just a bit surprised that the more technical culinary content of this book is as light as it is.

What’s Good: There are many things to love about this book. Let’s start with presentation - it is beautifully bound and nearly every recipe is accompanied by a gorgeous photograph. Though I understand that not every cookbook can include photos I still give them bonus points when they do. It’s not just about seeing what the finished product will look like; I also love to sit and leaf through the recipes, enjoy a sort of visual feast. “The Essence of Chocolate” is entirely satisfying on this front. The recipes are both unique and varied, ranging from favorites such as cakey brownies and chocolate drop cookies to more exotic things like cocoa chiffon cake, banana caramel cake and candied almonds. The recipes are not limited to desserts. This book also includes unexpected dishes that incorporate chocolate, for instance, chili-marinated flank steak and BBQ sauce. The Chocolate Pull-Apart Kuchen I made last month came from this book, as did my Apricot & Chocolate Challah, which was based upon this text’s recipe for chocolate chunk challah. (See: Baking and Books dot com) Content is organized both by type (dessert vs. savory dish) and by the amount of chocolate required. In addition to recipes, “The Essence of Chocolate” has incredibly helpful sections on chocolate techniques and types of chocolate. It also includes information about the history of chocolate and the Scharffen Berger chocolate company. I enjoyed the fact that I could cozy up with this book and indulge in a fascinating foray into the “legend and lore” of chocolate. Where else would you learn about the role it played in Mayan and Aztec rituals or about its part in Marie

Theresa's marriage to King Louis XIV?

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